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The Case of Dr. Pauling

TO THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR:

From the comment that has appeared in your columns and in other papers, it is apparent that there has been much misunderstanding of the purpose and scope of the hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security in the case of Dr. Linus Pauling. I should like to try to set the record straight.

First, I wish to emphasize that the Subcommittee is not investigating Dr. Pauling's viewpoint on nuclear testing. Nor is there any question of his right or the right of any American citizen to petition the United States Government, either directly or indirectly via the United Nations. Furthermore, it accepts the fact that the great majority of those who signed the petition, signed it in complete good faith as an appropriate expression of their personal views.

The Subcommittee is investigating one thing and one thing only: Was there substantial Communist participation in the organization of the petition? Was the petition utilized for Communist propaganda purposes in support of Soviet foreign policy, and if so, in what manner and to what degree?

Dr. Pauling has been asked for two things by the subcommittee:

He has been asked for the actual signatures of those who signed the petition—since he filed typewritten lists instead of the originals or photographic facsimiles with the UN.

He has been asked for the letters he received transmitting to him signatures or names for the petition.

I believe these are simple and reasonable requests. Any official in government who received a petition on any question that consisted of typewritten lists of names, would either ignore the petition or ask to see the original signatures. Moreover, the authenticity of names on a petition is, in general practice, established by the certification of whoever gathered the signatures.

It is to be regretted that Dr. Pauling has responded to the Subcommittee's test-ban policy, or for that matter, with Dr. Pauling's personal version of this policy, they would, I am confident, still consider it necessary in the interests of our national security, to investigate the matter of Communist participation.

The arguments contained in Dr. Pauling's petition may or may not have been intrinsically valid; in this the Subcommittee does not pass judgment. However,

If Communists participated in the work of circulating the petition they did not do so as individuals or simply because they believe in its purpose. A Communist never acts simply as an individual. He is a member of a disciplined, conspiratorial organization, directed by a hostile foreign government which, in statement after statement from Lenin through Stalin and Khrushchev, has committed itself to bury the Western democracies. Whatever action a Communist takes is taken under orders and is intended to subserve the interests of the Communist conspiracy. That is why the question of Communist participation is of importance.

The Subcommittee's interest in Dr. Pauling's petition is justified by evidence already received by the Subcommittee respecting infiltration of the test-ban movement.

Dr. Pauling has stated that he refuses "as a matter of conscience" to make public the names of those who collaborated with him in organizing the petition or the letters of transmittal received from them because this would expose them to reprisals.

For the life of me, I cannot understand this talk about "reprisals."

The general position that Dr. Pauling holds on nuclear testing is a widely held one. For my own part, I consider it mistaken; but I recognize that it is shared by many Americans who are genuinely concerned about what they consider to be the best interests of the United States. It is, in some measure, the position of the administration. Given this situation, it is preposterous to suggest that the subcommittee would or could inflict reprisals—doubly preposterous in view of the fact that many of those who collaborated with Dr. Pauling were nationals of foreign countries.

It has been stated by Dr. Pauling and by others that the Subcommittee's action in this case constitutes a violation of the right of petition. I know of no definition of the right of petition that would confer the privilege of secrecy or anonymity on the organizers of petition. A petition is by its nature a public act and in this sense, like a public organization, it comes under the principle of full disclosure.

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U. S. Senate Subcommittee
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